Small Islands and Natural Ponds Map Units

Six map units represent land cover features that do not fit in either the USNVC or the land use/land cover classification system developed by Anderson et al. (1976). These are split into two groups: Small Islands and Small Natural Ponds.

Photo credit: Kevin Hop

There are 4 map units that represent small upland islands >0.1 h in size, but less than the standard minimum mapping unit of 0.5 h. These islands are located within large open lakes, shallow bays, shrub and herbaceous wetlands, and peatlands. Because of their small size, the USNVC is not ideal from either a field or a photo perspective.

The Small Islands Map Units are as follows:

Small Island with Grass (*Map Unit Code SIG*)
Small Island with Rock (*Map Unit Code SIR*)
Small Island with Shrubs (*Map Unit Code SIS*)
Small Island with Trees (*Map Unit Code SIT*)

There are 2 map units that represent small natural ponds. These ponds are water bodies that are <10% vegetated and are <16 h in size. These small ponds do not fall within the Lakes (52) Class in the LUC classification system (Anderson et al), but rather within the Nonforested Wetland (62) Class. (Water, as defined in the classification system, uses the Bureau of Census' definition, which is defined as areas persistently covered with water, >200 m wide if linear, and covering at least 16 h.) The Nonforested Wetland Class was not used because this class includes vegetated types. The 2 map units were created to separate ponds that are affected by beaver activity from ponds that are not. Because of limitations in seeing submergent vegetation with CIR aerial photographs, some of these small ponds may indeed have >10% vegetation. In such cases, these polygons would best be described within the Midwest Pondweed Submerged Aquatic Wetland Association of the USNVC. Bodies of water (<10% vegetated) that are >16 h are mapped with the Streams and Canals or Lakes Map Units (see descriptions for WS and WLK).

The Small Natural Ponds Map Units are as follows:

Water-Beaver Pond (*Map Unit Code WBP*)
Water-Natural Pond (*Map Unit Code WNP*)